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COMMUNICATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW:

Sir:

IN an article in your journal, vol. XII., no. 2, entitled "The Literature of the South African War, 1899-1902, by a British Officer", I find the remark (p. 308), "The Boer is more skilful with the rifle than with the pen . . . With one exception [*Three Years' War*, by General De Wet] no Boer account of the Boer War has yet appeared." This is entirely untrue and must be explained by the little knowledge of Dutch literature and language the average Englishman has. A great deal of information about the war from the Boer side is given in the following books, mostly written in Dutch:

(1) *De Strijd tusschen Boer en Brit: De Herinnering van den Boeren-Generaal Chr. R. de Wet* (Amsterdam-Pretoria, Hüneker and Wormser, 1902). The book has been translated into English under the title *Three Years' War*. As De Wet writes in his preface that he is not responsible for any translation, I cannot tell how closely the original and the translation are identical. Though it is a book indispensable to the military historian, De Wet in his busy life was not able to give to it all the needful time and attention. Often the reader wants a fuller and more detailed account of facts, circumstances, and motives; the book lacks completeness in every direction.

(2) Dr. J. D. Kestell, *Met de Boeren Commando's* (Amsterdam-Pretoria, Hüneker and Wormser). This book, which has not been translated into English, so far as I know, is one of the best. The writer is a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Free State and a man of education and talent. He accompanied De Wet on his first *trek* to the Cape Colony; his heroic conduct as a field preacher was a great factor in keeping up the good spirit and courage of the Boers.

(3) Dr. J. D. Kestell and D. E. van Velden, *De Vredesonderhandelingen tusschen de Regeeringen der twee Zuid-Afrikaansche Republieken en de Vertegenwoordigers der Britsche Regeering* (Pretoria-Amsterdam, J. H. de Bussy). This contains valuable documents concerning the peace negotiations between the Boers and the British, and concerning the treaty of peace; a book indispensable for all who are interested in the history of the war, and entirely trustworthy.

There are a few more books by prominent Boer officers:

(4) C. C. J. Badenhorst, En Assistent Hoofdcommandant der Westelijke Afdeeling van den Oranje Vrijstaat, *Uit den Boeren-Oorlog, 1899-1902* (Amsterdam-Pretoria, Hüneker and Wormser, 1903). The author was the leading general of the western part of the Free State;

several facsimiles and documents are to be found in this book, which is quite trustworthy.

(5) B. J. Viljoen, Assistent Commandant Generaal, *Mijne Herinneringen uit den Anglo-Boeren Oorlog* (Amsterdam, W. Versluys). The author was a member of the Second Volksraad. When the war broke out he was soon made one of the Boer generals, was captured, and wrote his book while a prisoner of war at St. Helena (see also no. 13).

For the first part of the war:

(6) N. Hofmeyr, *Zes Maanden bij de Commando's* (The Hague, W. P. van Stockum en Zoon, 1903). The author was appointed official historian by the "Uitvoerende Raad Z.A.R." (Executive Council of the South African Republic). It covers only the first six months of the war.

Two books of "burgers" (citizens not officers on commando):

(7) D. S. van Warmelo, *Mijn Commando en Guerilla Commando Leven* (Amsterdam, W. Versluys, 1901). A narrative of his personal experiences in the war. The author is an educated and trustworthy man, son of a prominent minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. His book is worth reading.

(8) O. T. de Villiers (Kaapsch Rebel), *Met de Wet en Steyn in het Veld* (Amsterdam, Maatschappij Elsevier, 1903). The author, a Cape Colonial, joined the Boer forces very early in the war; afterwards he tried to promote an uprising in the Cape Colony, in which he failed, and only escaped capture by hiding in the mountains till the invading Boer commandos brought relief. His narrative is full of adventures, and is reliable.

(9) J. F. Naudé, *Vechten en Vluchten van Beyers en Kemp "bôkant" de Wet* (Rotterdam, Nijgh and van Ditmar). This book contains accounts of many fights and of the doings of the commandos operating in the west of the Transvaal, "bôkant" (i. e., to the northward) of the field of operations of General de Wet. The author was one of the representatives at the peace negotiations at Vereeniging.

(10) (Dr. jur.) H. ver Loren van Themaat, *Twee Jaren in den Boerenoorlog* (Haarlem, H. D. Tjeenk Willink en Zoon, 1903). The author, a Hollander, entered the Transvaal in December, 1899, and left the region of the war in January, 1902, by crossing the Orange River to German Southwest Africa. The book was written from careful notes made during the whole war, but the account is confined to personal experiences. The writer accompanied De Wet in many of his famous treks, in "Theron's Verkenningcorps" (Theron's scouts).

(11) *Een Hollandsch Officier in Zuid Afrika: Nagelaten Papieren van Lieutenant Gerrit Boldingh* (Rotterdam, B. van de Watering, 1903). The author, a lieutenant of artillery in the Dutch army, was killed while invading the Cape Colony with Commandant Kritzinger. He was an intelligent, courageous, and faithful officer, and played a patriotic part when General Prinsloo surrendered in the "Witte Bergen" with 4000

Free Staters. The letters which he sent home, and his notes, are published in this book.

(12) Mevrouw (i. e., Mrs.) de la Rey, *Mijne Omszwervingen en Beproevingen gedurende den Oorlog* (Amsterdam-Pretoria, Hüneker and Wormser). In this little book the wife of General de la Rey tells how she wandered with her children in an ox-wagon over the *veld*, always in danger of being captured by the English troops. The book is most attractive by its simplicity and firm patriotic spirit.

(13) Johanna Brandt-van Warmelo, *Het Concentratie Kamp van Irene* (Amsterdam, Jacques Dusseau and Company, 1905). A prominent Boer woman, the daughter of a famous Transvaal clergyman and wife of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, tells in this little book, in a simple way, of the sufferings of the Boer women and children in the concentration-camp of Irene, where she was nursing the sick.

(14) Steyn, de Wet, und der Orange Freistaat: *Tagebuchblätter aus dem südafrikanischen Kriege* (Tübingen, Verlag der Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, 1902). The author is unknown; probably a German officer. He criticizes in an able way, and his account of the few months during which he "trekked" with De Wet is very illuminating.

(15) Adalbert Graf Sternberg, *Meine Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen im Boerenkriege* (Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1901). The author, a member of Parliament in Austria, went to the war to escape the tedium of peaceful surroundings, and looked upon warfare as a sort of sport. His behavior in the war is not very glorious. His book, though containing some interesting details, bears the marks of his lack of earnestness. He surrendered before Kronje was captured.

(16) Dr. W. van Everdingen, *De Oorlog in Zuid Afrika* (Delft, J. Waltman, jr., 1905). A history of the war in two volumes, made up out of Dutch and English documents.

(17) Andries de Wet and H. van Doornik, *Der Kampf in der Kapkolonie* (Munich, S. F. Lehmann). Parts of this book were written by Andries de Wet, a Cape Colonial, other parts by B. C. du Plessis, an Afriander from the Republics, others by H. van Doornik, a Hollander. The book bears the signs of having been prepared for a publisher, and lacks simplicity and sobriety, though containing much that is instructive for a right understanding of the Boer fighting in the Cape Colony.

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